



After the Single Use
Rethinking Plastics in Healthcare



HYDERABAD, INDIA

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

OPEN CALL

OPEN CALL: Artist in Residence

HYDERABAD

Manufacturing, Waste, and the Politics of Disposal

We invite an artist to join a team of anthropologists at the University of Hyderabad to explore the economies, environments, and everyday politics of single-use medical plastics in Telangana State.

LOCATION

Hyderabad, India

INSTITUTION

Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

RESEARCH LEAD

Nanda Kishore Kannuri, Associate Professor, University of Hyderabad

RESIDENCY PERIOD

Part-Time March-May 2027

Based on artist preference in dialogue with the research team

NOTE: Artist is responsible for arranging their own accommodation and travel

FEE

Artist fee: 255,000 INR

Materials fee: 102,000 INR

Accommodation & Travel: 70,000 INR

APPLICATION DEADLINE

23 October, 2026

RESPONSE TIMEFRAME

You will receive a response to your application before 20 December, 2026

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT RESIDENCY

Info.noba@vitenparken.no

ABOUT: AFTER THE SINGLE USE

If the world's healthcare sector were a country, it would rank 5th in global carbon emissions. A significant portion of these emissions come from single-use plastic medical products like syringes, surgical drapes, and diagnostic devices, all designed for disposal. These materials emit toxins and greenhouse gases when burned, leak microplastics and chemicals when landfilled, and pollute marine environments, with direct and indirect effects on human health. After the Single Use (ATSU) is a five-year research project asking: how did we get here, and what would it take to move healthcare towards a circular economy of reuse?

Led by the University of Edinburgh, UK and funded by the Wellcome Trust, the project brings together historians, anthropologists, and public health researchers across eight countries (India, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, Senegal, Switzerland, Tanzania and USA) to examine the history, present, and future of single-use medical plastics.

Driven by the belief that understanding this crisis requires perspectives beyond research alone, each research unit will host an artist in residence. The eight residencies are independent but connected: selected artists will have the opportunity to meet online and exchange with other artists in residence at the other seven sites, and all eight residencies will contribute to a shared international online exhibition.

The artist in residence program is coordinated by NOBA (Norwegian Bio-Art Arena), Vitenparken, Norway on behalf of the After the Single Use collective. If you have questions about the open call reach out to info.noba@vitenparken.no

THE UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD RESEARCH UNIT

After the Single Use explores how a culture of disposability became normalised in healthcare systems, and the environmental, social, and health impacts of single-use medical products. The research team will employ ethnographic, archival, and arts-based methods to examine the historical, local, and global factors that have shaped the current healthcare waste crisis in India, with a focus on Telangana State. The field sites for this project will include investigating diverse healthcare settings across the tribal, rural, and urban contexts in the state. Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana State, is renowned for its major hubs for pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing and a major destination for medical tourism, with the presence of large corporate hospitals in the city promising quality health care.

Telangana is also one of the leading states with an organised plastic industry, consisting of about 6000 units with a production capacity of 9 lakh metric tons every year. The plastic industry, along with other companies dealing with precision engineering and electronics, facilitates medical device innovation and manufacturing and supply of single-use plastics to the health care sector. The project also involves studying global interconnections in the

circulation of healthcare waste and comparing the local solutions to reduce reliance on single-use plastics.

The research team in India includes four Anthropologists working to explore the conceptual intersection between the economy of medical manufacturing, sustainability, social, cultural, and political contexts of single-use plastic waste and recycling in the health care sector. We will use anthropological and historical approaches to study processes, people, places, policies, things, and history in the context of medical Imaging Infrastructure in the urban regions, point-of-care diagnostics in the rural communities, political economy of manufacturing.

ABOUT THE ATSU ARTIST RESIDENCY

As part of ATSU, eight artists will be selected (one per research location) to join the local research team for a residency period between March-May 2027. This is a research-embedded residency: the focus is on curiosity, exchange, and process. Artists will have the time and space to engage with the research, bring their own perspective and practice to bear, and explore what emerges.

Artists are not expected to illustrate or communicate the research. They are invited to work alongside it — to observe, question, and respond in whatever way feels true to their practice. The aim is a genuine exchange, in which both the artist and the researchers come away with new ways of thinking.

Artistic works in progress will be presented locally at or near the end of the residency period, and the artist will contribute work to the ATSU online exhibition after completion of the residency. The results will be featured alongside 7 other artists in residence projects working with 7 other research groups worldwide. The artist fee covers the residency, the local presentation of work and the production of work for the online exhibition.

WHAT THE ARTIST IN HYDERABAD WOULD ENGAGE WITH

As the artist, you will be embedded in the team, participating in its activities and developing work that emerges from that encounter. This includes access to:

- Archival material collected by the research team
- Health care facilities where data is being collected
- Biomedical waste recycling facilities
- Dump yards where single-use plastic is disposed
- Participants and other stakeholders relevant to the project
- Access to the other ATSU artists and researchers in the network for exchange of ideas

WHAT THE ATSU RESIDENCY OFFERS

The residency will be based at the Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad, where the artist will have a desk and working space. The ATSU research unit can help facilitate connections to the Department of Fine Arts based at the University and other networks of organisations working in this space.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The artist will work closely with the research team to co-design art and craft-based ideas to re-imagine the circulation of single-use plastics in the health care sector. The artist must collaborate with marginalised waste pickers, healthcare workers, and other stakeholders to focus on promoting sustainable solutions, and shifting public and institutional perceptions. We are looking for artists who are curious, self-directed, and comfortable working in an unfamiliar environment.

You do not need prior experience of working with researchers. What matters is that you can articulate why this residency interests you, and that you are genuinely open to engaging with the research. You might be a good fit if you:

- are drawn to questions of health, waste, material culture, and environmental justice
- can work independently and take initiative with your time
- are interested in how knowledge is made; in archives, in fieldwork, in communities
- are open to process-led work without a pre-determined outcome
- are comfortable with ambiguity and willing to learn
- Are based in Hyderabad or are able commit to being based there during the residency period
- The candidate should be able to communicate in Telugu, Hindi and English.

APPLICATION CRITERIA AND TERMS & CONDITIONS

There are general criteria for the artist in residence across all 8 locations worldwide. Before applying please read the terms and conditions document for the ATSU Artist Residency for more details on the residency. You can download both of these on the open call webpage.

<https://aftersingleuse.net/news-events/2026/open-call-artist-residence>

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for the ATSU Artist Residency, fill in [this form](#).
The QR code below also takes you to the application form.

